



————— *Commission on* —————
H i s p a n i c A f f a i r s
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2 0 0 4 A n n u a l R e p o r t

COMMISSIONER BIOS

Leo Gaeta Commissioner Gaeta, recently re-elected as chair of the Commission, is the program director for the Columbia Basin Community Health Association. He lives in Othello and is a captain in the Washington Air National Guard.

Gabriel Banfi Commissioner Banfi served as the vice-chair of the Commission for the past year, and was also the chair of the Emergent Issues Committee. He is an attorney with a law practice in Bellevue and is also involved in the Eastside Latino Leadership Forum.

Diana Avalos Commissioner Avalos works for the Vancouver School District as a program director for the Migrant Education Program. She serves as the chair of the Education Committee.

Yvonne Lopez-Morton Commissioner Lopez-Morton is the Media Relations Manager at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture and is the past president of the Spokane Hispanic Business Professional Association. She is the vice-chair for the Commission.

Gabriel Portugal Commissioner Portugal is a teacher in the Kennewick School District and is also the Committee Board President for the Tri-Cities "Cinco de Mayo" Committee. Commissioner Portugal resides in Pasco.

Homero Tamez Commissioner Tamez holds a Masters in Social Work and provides independent counseling and consulting services to residents of the Tri-Cities area. Commissioner Tamez resides in Pasco.

Faviola Barbosa Commissioner Barbosa is the Multi Cultural Affair Coordinator for Wenatchee Valley College. She serves on the Education Committee. Commissioner Barbosa resides in Wenatchee.

Uriel Iñiguez Commissioner Iñiguez works for the Department of Corrections as a Correctional Manager. He serves on the Economic Development Committee and the Personnel Committee. Commissioner Iñiguez resides in Olympia.

Rebecca Villareal Commissioner Villareal works as a Business Lender at Cascadia Revolving Fund. She serves as the chair of the Economic Development Committee. Commissioner Villareal resides in Bainbridge Island.

Karla Padilla-Reyna Commissioner Padilla-Reyna is a Broker for New York Life. She resides in Zillah, WA.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

June 9, 2004

RE: 2004 Commission on Hispanic Affairs Annual Report

Dear Friends and Community Members,

Throughout the year, the Commission holds public meetings at various locations across the State of Washington. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for community members to inform the Commission regarding issues that affect or impact the Latino community. The attached report compiles information on input received as well as recommendations that address immediate and long-term needs of our Washington State Latino communities.

Although each community is unique, there are vast similarities in issues faced by Latinos. Common concerns that we hear about across the State include: education (dropout rates, Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) testing, access to higher education), farmworker issues (housing, pesticide exposure, work injuries, employment), healthcare (healthcare coverage and access to services), language access for benefits and services, immigration and racial profiling, economic development and community empowerment.

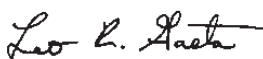
As a Commission, we are tasked with advising the Governor, legislators, and state agencies regarding issues affecting Latinos. Commission work has been focused on activities within the scope of local and state issues. Earlier this year the Governor clarified his expectations to the Commission by authorizing the Commission to also work with issues that impact Latinos at the federal level. This opens the door for the Commission to work with broader issues that impact Latinos such as immigration and education reform. We welcome this challenge and look forward to addressing our concerns and working with our federal legislators.

On behalf of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, I would like to personally thank Governor Gary Locke for his ongoing support and attention to the various needs of Latinos. During Governor Locke's tenure, much work has been done in the areas of farmworker housing, healthcare, access to higher education, and access to government services. Altogether, I feel confident in acknowledging that this work has improved the quality of life for Latinos in the State of Washington.

I would also like to thank the Latino leaders and community advocates for their commitment and continued advocacy for and on behalf of Latinos in Washington. Your tireless efforts often go unrecognized but it is truly remarkable to see the fruits of your hard work. I'd also like to extend special recognition and thanks to each Commissioner and the Commission staff who teamed up and did a commendable job in gathering this information and preparing this report.

I am pleased to be able to provide you with the Commission's 2004 Annual Report. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs will continue to work hard to address issues and concerns affecting Latinos and looks forward to continued service to the Latino community and to the State of Washington. Should any questions arise regarding the contents of this report, please contact the Commission on Hispanic Affairs office or myself at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



Leo R. Gaeta, Chair
Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs

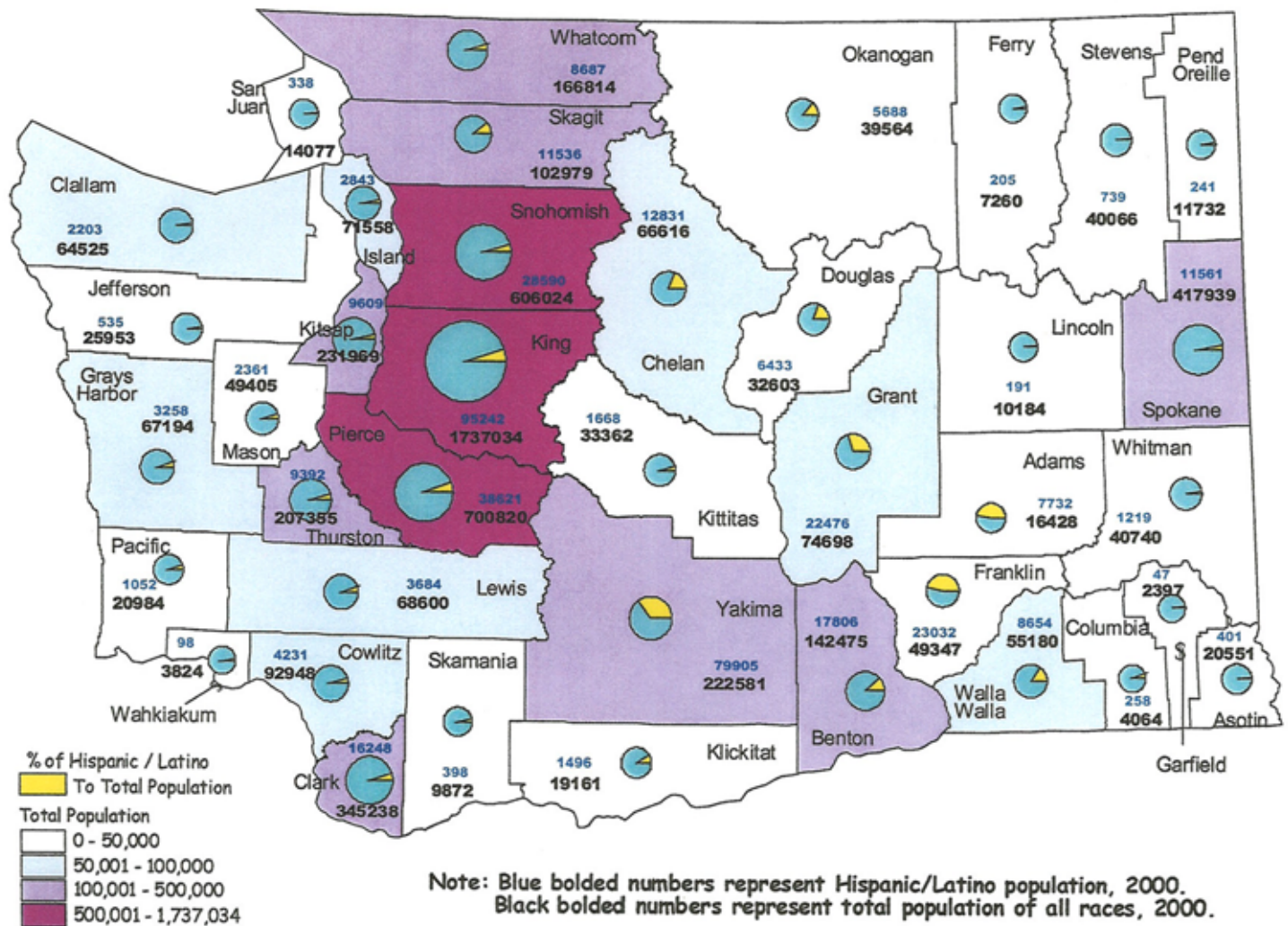
DEMOGRAPHIC NOTES

- From 1990 to 2000, the Latino population of Washington State increased by 105% (2000 US Census).
- Almost 100,000 Latin Americans moved to Washington in the last 10 years (Census 2000).
- Washington's estimated Hispanic population of 490,448 ranks 11th in the country in terms of raw numbers (The Olympian 09/18/03).
- Thirty-one percent (31%) of residents of Yakima County speak another language at home (Census 2000). Ninety percent (90%) of the residents of Mattawa are of Hispanic origin, and 90% speak a language other than English at home (Census 2000). Almost half of all residents of Adams and Franklin Counties are of Hispanic origin (Census 2000).
- One-quarter of all Latinos in Washington live in King County (Census 2000).
- Forty percent of Washington State Latinos are under 18 years of age (Census 2000).
- In 1990, 7% of adults in Chelan County were of Hispanic origin. In 2000, the percentage of Latino adults rose to 15% of the total population. And according to the 2000 census, 30% of the children (18 and under) of Chelan County were of Hispanic origin.
- As of 2001, there were 1,088 Latino students in the Granger School District (82% of total school population), but only 10 Latino teachers (14% of all teachers). (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction).
- In Miami-Dade County, Florida, one out of five Latinos has at least graduated from college. In Washington State, one out of ten Latinos has at least graduated from college. (Census 2000).
- On average, a white Caucasian male with a college diploma earned about \$65,000 in 2001. Similarly educated white Caucasian women made about 40 percent less, while black and Hispanic men earned 30 percent less. (The Olympian, 3/31/03).
- According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the high school graduation rate for Latinos was 71.9% for the 2001-2002 school year.
- According to the Census 2000 Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation, approximately 70% of farmworkers in the Washington area are of Latino origins
- Latinos are now farming 625 farms totaling 130,500 acres; up from 378 farms totaling 87,000 acres 10 years ago (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, May 14, 2002).
- In 1998, 7.2% of state expenditures went to minority and women owned businesses (\$122,849,917). Initiative 200 was passed in November of that year. By 2002, only 1.5% of state expenditures went to MWBEs (\$29,574,009). (Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises).
- Hispanics have a purchasing power of about \$540 billion (Department of Commerce). In August 2003, HispanTelligence estimated that U.S. Hispanic purchasing power reached nearly \$600 billion in the second quarter of 2003. That figure represents an increase of 11 percent over the previous year's purchasing power estimate of \$540 billion. In the next five years, Hispanic buying power will grow by a total of 60% (average annual growth rate of 9.9%) to reach an estimated \$926 billion by 2007 (University of Georgia, SELIG Center).
- The growth of Hispanics has sparked a surge in entrepreneurship and in the number of companies owned by Hispanics in the USA. There are more than 1.1 million companies, four times the number two decades ago (USA Today 6/20/03). Hispanics now own one of every 20 U.S. companies, the latest Census data show. More of them are becoming big businesses. Nearly 27,000 have annual revenue of \$1 million or more, which puts them in the corporate elite (USA Today 6/20/03).



WASHINGTON STATE

Distribution of Hispanic/Latino to Total Population in Individual Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2004 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

The 2004 legislative session in Olympia showed once again how the work of our state legislators directly impacts the lives of Latinos in Washington, and how such work relates directly to the issues of importance to our community: education, health care, and issues affecting farmworkers and the immigrant community. This year's session was a mix of successes and postponements, with all unfulfilled proposals likely to arise once again in 2005.

The 2004 session resulted in the addressing of one of the Commission's primary educational priorities: the granting of conditional scholarships for bilingual students. **House Bill (HB) 2708 establishes a modest conditional scholarship program, to be administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.** The bill grants conditional scholarships (or forgivable loans) for students in college who declare their intention to teach in a **high need subject matter**. For students who teach in a declared "teacher shortage area", one year of loans would be forgiven for every year taught in that shortage area.

HB 2708 specifically emphasizes bilingual ability as a criteria to consider for all scholarship applicants. As the Commission has stated in the past, Washington needs more bilingual teachers in its schools to better interact with Spanish-language dominant students and parents. We are excited to see bilingual ability as a defined criteria for applicants for these conditional scholarships, and will work with the HEC Board to promote this program to bilingual students who would like to become teachers in Washington. One shortcoming of the legislation is that it did not identify bilingual education (or English as a Second Language) as a high need area, and we hope that the legislature addresses this concern in the future.

HB 2195, another educational bill of specific concern to the Commission also became law in 2004. The bill allows for retakes and alternative assessments for students who do not pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in their first attempt. Latino students, specifically English Language Learners, do not succeed at the WASL in the same proportion as non-Latino students. The ability for retakes and alternative assessments provides Latino students with the opportunity to gain their Certificate of Academic Achievement and move forward in their educational paths, less hampered by a rigid WASL testing structure.

One bill that the Commission would have liked to see move forward, but did not, was **Senate Bill (SB) 6268**, which would have allowed for the consideration of race and ethnicity in higher education admissions. Washington law has not allowed for such consideration during the last five years, and we have seen a respective decline in the percentage of people of color in our higher education institutions. The Commission believes that a student's

cultural upbringing is a unique and important quality that should be considered by colleges and institutions when selecting their incoming classes. We hope to see this bill reintroduced in 2005. We appreciate the courage of the sponsors of SB 6268 (Senator Kohl-Welles as the primary sponsor) and of its companion bill, **HB 2700** (Representative Gutierrez-Kenney as primary sponsor), who had to endure strong questioning by the public as well as a contentious House hearing of the bill.

In the area of health care, the Commission was pleased to see the legislature pass a bill establishing a select committee on health care disparities (**Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419**). The establishment of this committee is a clear recognition of the many disparities that Latinos face in the provision of health care in our state, as we are disproportionately less insured, disproportionately more prone to disease, and disproportionately under-represented in our state's medical staffs. In protecting the health of farmworkers, the legislature spoke once again on the issue of cholinesterase monitoring (**SB 6599**), refining the process of blood monitoring for handlers of certain types of pesticides. The Commission strongly supports such a blood monitoring program, and hopes that the agricultural industry and farmworker advocates can continue to work together to protect the safety of our farmworker communities.

Finally, two bills were presented for the first time in the legislature that did not reach the Governor's desk for signature, but the Commission advised in favor of both and hopes to see these proposals reintroduced in 2005. The first is **HB 3029**, which would have offered statewide support for the Mexican consular identification card. We believe that Mexican nationals in our state who may not have immigration documents should still have the ability to identify themselves before law enforcement, at banks, at our city halls, and at our public libraries. The card would allow for such identification, and is officially recognized in many cities in our state, including Seattle, Tacoma, Yakima, Bellevue, and Renton.

The second bill, which the Commission believes should be reintroduced, is **HB 2863**, which would require state agencies to provide public notices regarding public health, safety, or welfare in the language of the community addressed. Whether the issue is the placement of sex-offender housing, or an emergency notice regarding water or food quality, or a notice regarding disaster recovery, Limited English Proficient (LEP) households in predominant LEP communities in Washington should have the same ability to be informed about these matters as English-speaking households.

We thank every legislator who listened to our concerns or invited us to participate in hearings in 2004.

High School Incentive Reward Programs/Drop Out Prevention

The crisis of minority students' mass exodus from public education cannot be addressed by schools alone. Many factors that shape students' learning—as well as their motivation to learn—come from outside the classroom. To be college ready students must pass three crucial hurdles: they must graduate from high school, they must have taken certain courses in high school that college require for the acquisition of necessary skills, and they must demonstrate basic literacy skills.

Any strategy for increasing minority representation in higher education has to focus on fixing the deficiencies in our public school system, ensuring that minority students graduate from high school with the skills needed to be ready for college.

At present situation secondary high school Hispanic students need alternative choices in addition to college options. High school Hispanic students would benefit at most with incentives to remain in school. Currently, there are several national programs, which address incentive reward programs. These programs not only provide an incentive to graduate from school but also formulate partnerships with private industries to fund college education trust funds for students. One of these national programs "I Have a Dream" helps children from low-income areas reach their education and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment with an assured opportunity for higher education.

Dozens of studies have shown that students in smaller high schools graduate and go on to college at a higher rate than their counterparts in large high schools. In small schools, they get rigorous, engaging courses and the opportunity to develop close relationships with their teachers and other adults.

Many experts say large, impersonal high schools, with their anonymity and lack of rigor, are the biggest obstacle to personalizing education so all students can succeed. CHA supports all efforts to improve the enrollment and graduation of Latinos/as from College, and in particular the following initiatives:

- State wide implementation of incentive reward programs for disadvantage Hispanic students.
- Allowing race and ethnicity to be considered in higher education admissions (SB6268).
- The A+ Commission's goal -setting authority to permit adoption of goals for reducing the drop out rate.

- Stronger and smaller high schools, transform larger schools into smaller learning communities intended to address the state's growing Hispanic student achievement gap and better prepare students, boost achievement for low-income, minority students around state

Bilingual Education Interpreter

The significance of having trained interpreters in school settings should not be underestimated. Yet, in educational settings, formally trained interpreters and translators working with limited English proficient students and their families are still uncommon.

There are currently no requirements for bilingual educational interpreters for bilingual and non-English speaking students to be certified or to meet standardized qualifications or competencies. Language proficiency in English and the student primary language including: oral communication with children and parents in general communication, assessment, intervention situations and educational settings. Reading and writing English proficiency and student primary language CHA recommends the following options:

1. Requiring that all bilingual educational interpreters for bilingual and non-English speaking students meet standards;
2. Requiring the State Board of Education or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, as appropriate, to establish competencies for bilingual educational interpreters;
3. Identifying state and national training programs that could prepare bilingual educational interpreters to meet and maintain any standards or competencies;

Student Concerns

The Commission continues to be involved with racial and student equity issues impacting Hispanic student achievement and equitable access to education. Most recently the Commission was requested to assist with two separate incidents. Firstmost, racial and inappropriate remarks were made by a school principal at Hispanic students. Thereafter another incident of unfair basis treatment of a Hispanic student occurred at another school district.

These occurrences are not isolated incidents and only add racial tensions and further disenfranchise Hispanic students and parents in our educational system. The Commission will continue to collaborate with parents, students and school officials to address racial and student equity concerns.

EDUCATION STUDENT CONCERNS (CONTINUED)

The Commission supports all efforts to improve racial relations, student equity and communication in the Hispanic community and school districts. The Commission supports the following recommendations:

- Invest resource and develop staff training in areas of cultural sensitivity, cultural competency and cultural responsiveness.
- Encourage OSPI Washington State Association of School Administrators, Washington State Association of School Counselors and other educational agencies to develop standards and competencies in areas of multicultural and cultural diversity.

WASL Trends for Latino Students for the 2002-2003 School Year

Based on the following statistics the Commission is very concerned about the affect the WASL is going to have on the future of Latinos students. The Commission worked with Latino/a Educational Achievement Program (LEAP) and the Legislature in addressing this concern. The Commission will continue to work with LEAP, A+ Commission, OSPI and the Legislature in finding ways to address WASL score disparities of Latino students.

In 2002-2003 Fourth graders taking the WASL test, less than 50% met the standards required by the State in each of the selected areas.

- 31% met standards for math (9,513 students tested).
- 41% met standards for reading (9,470 students tested).
- 34% met standards for writing (9,396 students tested).
- 39% met standards for listening (9,491 students tested).

In 2002-2003 Tenth graders taking the WASL test, less than 50% met the standards required by the State in each of the tested areas.

- 16% met standards for math (6,138 students tested).
- 35% met standards for reading (6,061 students tested).
- 34% met standards for writing (5,921 students tested).
- 53% met standards for listening (6,001 students tested).
- 11% met standards for science (5,305 students tested).

(WASL Trends obtained from <http://ReportCard.ospi.k12.wa.us/Reports/WASLTrends>)

EMERGENT ISSUES

Racial Profiling

Definition – Racial Profiling” is the illegal use of race or ethnicity as a factor in deciding to stop and question, take enforcement action, arrest, or search a person or vehicle with or without a legal basis under the United States Constitution or the Washington State Constitution”.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs throughout its travels in the State of Washington has heard testimony from numerous residents that they are the victims of the practice of racial profiling. The majority of incidents described by Hispanic residents in the State of Washington are related to traffic stops by law enforcement.

On or about June 1, 2003, the Washington State Patrol in association with the Division of Governmental Studies and Services at Washington State University released the Data Analysis Project Report or Bias Policing Study, which had been conducted in the State of Washington. The report provided by the Washington State Patrol concludes that the most significant primary finding of the Traffic Stop Data Analysis effort is that there is no evidence of a pattern or disproportionate stopping of minorities by the Washington State Patrol Officers. However, the report also concludes that it is clear from the survey results that many

citizens believe that racial profiling is taking place and that minorities are subject to disproportionate stops by Officers of the Washington State Patrol.

The Commission is concerned with regards to the fact that the Washington State Patrol has concluded that there is no evidence of a pattern of disproportionate stopping of minorities, yet it is clear from the survey results that citizens believe that racial profiling is taking place and that minorities are subject to disproportionate stops by Officers of the Washington State Patrol.

The Commission believes that it is imperative that the practice of racial profiling as well as profiling on the basis of ethnicity or national origin stop. Therefore, we need to as a Commission and as a community to continue to collect data from specific individuals and different jurisdictions that claim that they have been stopped by law enforcement due to bias policing. In addition, we should continue to keep the lines of communication open with the Washington State Patrol and on occasion request meetings with the Chief of WSP and other District Captains. Finally, it is important that we maintain our position that other law enforcement agencies should collect the same data that has been collected by the Washington State Patrol. The report indicates that

EMERGENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

more than 400 U.S. law enforcement agencies have instituted traffic stop data collection measures, and at least 14 states have passed legislation mandating police to eliminate racial profiling. The U.S. Congress has considered and likely will consider again, a proposed Traffic Stop Statistics Act that would mandate the collection of race-related traffic stop data by all State and local law enforcement agencies. The Commission applauds efforts by the Washington State Patrol to document data on traffic stops and searches. In addition, we must support all legislation that would mandate the collection of race-related traffic stop data by State and local law enforcement agencies.

Health Care

Every day thousands of Latino families find themselves without any type of healthcare coverage in the state of Washington. It is estimated that as many as two out of every three Latinos across the nation lack any type of healthcare coverage making Latinos the largest uninsured population group. State policy changes over the past several years have contributed to the increase in the uninsured among Latinos in Washington State. As a result of these changes, many benefits or programs have changed to the point that they have cut services to many Latino families. Changes in Medicaid coverage for immigrant children and cuts in the Basic Health Plan, have resulted in thousands of immigrant families losing their healthcare coverage or not being able to access any type of healthcare coverage. According to information provided by Children's Alliance, as many as 28,000 immigrant families lost their coverage resulting from changes made in Medicaid coverage during the past two years.

During the past year, the following concerns regarding healthcare have been brought to the attention of the Commission:

- Criteria changes made to Maternity Support Services and Maternity Case Management services that overwhelmingly screened out Latino women from being eligible for these services.
- Injured farmworkers being released from Labor and Industries medical coverage but still requiring additional medical care follow-up and find they have no healthcare coverage and are made ineligible for other benefits.
- Concerns on the impact of implementing Medicaid Premiums.
- Disparities in health - particularly the lack of focus in developing Latino healthcare professionals and access to care.
- Lack of utilization of interpreters during medical visits.

Criteria changes in Maternity Support and Maternity Case Management Services

Under the First Steps program, the State of Washington offers an array of services that includes Maternity Support Services and Maternity Case Management Services designed to provide and promote access to prenatal care services in an effort to improve positive pregnancy outcomes. In October of 2003, this program underwent a restructure that included elimination of Maternity Case Management Services and the creation of Infant Case Management. This program change established new eligibility criteria that modified or eliminated risk factors that made many Latino women eligible for these services. Some of the risk factors that were modified or eliminated included: limited English proficiency, low education level, limited support system, alcohol or substance use in the environment, and homelessness. The result of this change was that as many as 80% of Latino women were made ineligible for these services. Case management services are provided to high risk pregnant patients and include monthly home visits to assess patient's needs and assist patients in accessing medical services as well as other needed resources.

Various healthcare providers who serve large Latino populations organized an effort to advocate and provide testimony on the impact of these changes to Latino Women. Organizations involved included Seamar Community Health Center, Yakima Valley Farmworker's Clinic and Columbia Basin Health Association along with the Commission on Hispanic Affairs. These organizations provided written input as well as testimony at public meetings and hearing regarding this matter. This resulted in a revision of the policy change that modified the eligibility criteria that once again considered risk factors that made Latino women high risk and eligible for case management services.

Concerns on the impact of implementing Medicaid Premiums

During the 2003 Legislative Session, there was a policy change made to the state's Medicaid program that would require families beginning at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level to pay monthly premiums. This proposed change has raised concerns from families, healthcare advocates and healthcare providers. Concerns raised to the Commission include:

- Families being dropped from Medicaid coverage due to their inability to afford premiums.
- The process will become too complicated that families will be dropped from coverage or will not apply for services because they are not able to work through the process.

EMERGENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- Concerns that this is another attempt designed to further eliminate immigrant families from eligibility for Medicaid and other healthcare coverage services.

In May 2004, Governor Gary Locke postponed the implementation of premiums for children enrolled in Medicaid for a year. This provided a temporary relief for those families that would have been affected. The Commission recommends that alternative ways of maintaining these services for low income families be considered. The Commission also recommends that prior to drafting policy changes, state agencies provide an impact statement that looks at the disproportionate impact to communities of color for proposed policy changes.

Disparities in Health

As indicated earlier in this report, Latinos are the largest uninsured group in the nation. These gaps in health can also be seen in other areas.

- Latinos face disproportionately high rates in the prevalence of chronic disease such as diabetes.
- Latino students' enrollment into healthcare profession careers is significantly lower than any other minority group.
- Latinos often receive unequal treatment in receiving healthcare services due to their lack of healthcare coverage, ability to access care, or other barriers to include linguistic access and transportation.

The Commission feels that these disparities in health care can no longer be overlooked. With Latinos being the largest ethnic minority group in the state, the impact of not addressing these concerns will result in increasing health care expenditures as well as greater disparities in health for Latinos. The Commission recommends and supports the findings on the Board of Health which includes: addressing cultural and linguistic barriers for accessing health care services, developing career opportunities for minorities to enter and complete health care careers, and consider the impact of policy changes that adversely impact the health of minority communities in our state.

Lack of utilization of interpreters during medical visits

Over the years, the area of language access for services has continually been brought to the attention of the Commission. This area of Concerns that have been brought to the Commission's attention include:

- Families not being able to access services because they don't speak English.

- Families not understanding what the condition is or treatment instructions are because of language barriers.
- Children in the family being utilized to interpret for medical visits.
- The use of unqualified interpreters who don't have a good understanding of the language or lack the ability to translate effectively.

Although the state of Washington provides reimbursement for certified interpreters, these services are not utilized in the provision of medical services for one reason or another. The Commission finds that this issue is not only unique to health care but spreads to other areas including local governments, state agencies, and school districts. At this time, the commission plans on looking into this area further before making any recommendations.

Injured farmworkers and Labor and Industries

Many farmworkers sustain injuries on the job resulting from the dangerous nature of the work they perform. Once the worker is injured, a claim is filed and the worker begins receiving services from L & I. These services include medical coverage, financial compensation during the time they are unable to work, and rehabilitation services. Concerns that have been brought to the attention of the Commission include:

- Being released to work too soon after the injury and not fully recuperated.
- Employers not complying with doctor's orders on providing light duty work.
- Workers facing termination of employment (or feeling threatened) if they don't perform the work being asked.
- Workers that sustaining permanent injury are being released from L& I coverage.
- Workers don't feel confidence in the medical provider's assessments or diagnosis.
- L & I taking too long to provide compensation or providing barriers in order to receive compensation.
- Once a claim is closed, it is difficult to re-open resulting in workers not having medical coverage to receive treatment needed.

The Commission will work with L&I to address these concerns and to encourage L & I to make services more user friendly for Latinos. The Commission recommends that L & I establishes listening sessions or establishes a forum for farmworkers who find themselves in this situation to have their concerns looked into.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to a research report published by the University of Georgia Selix Center for Economic Growth, April 2002:

- Hispanics spending power has more than doubled from \$225 billion in 1990 to \$491 billion in 2000 to \$580 billion in 2002 in the nation.
- It is estimated that the Hispanic buying power will grow by 60% to an estimated \$926 billion in 2007 in the nation.
- Hispanics purchasing power in Washington State in 2002 was at \$7.4 billion. It is one of the highest in the nation and continues to grow at a very rapid pace.
- From 1990 to 2002 Hispanic purchase grew 254%.

With these statistics in mind, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, decided to assemble a Committee on Economic Development. The committee was created in February 2004 and has begun to identify short and long term statewide practices to help the Hispanic businesses in Washington State.

In pursuit of the mission, the Economic Committee is working on projects consisting of the following:

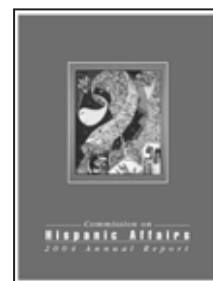
- Formulating partnerships with governmental agencies targeted to helping the small business. The first partnership considered is the US Small Business

Administration. The second consideration would be with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These partnerships would be accomplished by executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the agencies, and would be celebrated at formal receptions.

- Creating full-day conferences dedicated to educational training by various governmental agencies. The conferences would take place on a semi-annual basis at different locations throughout Washington—beginning with the Tri-Cities and subsequently in Skagit, Seattle, and Spokane. The conferences would be organized by a committee comprising of the Commission and State and Federal agencies (i.e. Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises (OMWBE), Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), Labor & Industries (L&I), Department Of Transportation (DOT), General Administration (GA), and Small Business Administration (SBA)) that deal with minority and other small businesses and local community chambers and associations.
- Pulling together resources for the Hispanic business. These resources include listings of governmental agencies, access to capital, statistics, and census information.

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